

Eckhart Tolle - Inner Directions 2003 - Freeing Yourself From Identification with your Mind

[Speaker 2] (0:00 - 0:18)

This is the audio soundtrack from a videotape recording. As the video starts, Eckert's sitting on stage, looking at the audience. And the minute and a half of silence that follows is simply him looking at the audience.

Silence.

[Speaker 1] (1:46 - 1:45:23)

No expectancy, not waiting for anything to happen, being completely present here. We'll be sitting together here for an hour and a half or two hours, simply to allow that state of consciousness that is free of future, free of past, timeless state of simple presence to emerge here within yourself. Because that's why you're here.

You didn't come here to be fed new thoughts, concepts, ideas. Perhaps a few signposts, they are useful. But you didn't come here to collect more signposts, which say Rome or Mecca or Enlightenment, and then carry them home and put them in your library or living room.

Isn't that a beautiful signpost? Or worship the signpost, a concept, an idea, a thought. We're really here.

This is not a normal conference where information is conveyed that you take home. In a way, we're here so that the opposite of that can happen, a relinquishing of concepts and ideas. Ultimately, and that may sound a little bit frightening to the mind, relinquishing thought.

What is stillness other than a state of consciousness? That is free of noise. This is not some distant goal to be achieved in ten years' time or in a future lifetime.

If this state of consciousness were not emerging in you already, you wouldn't be sitting here. But to the mind and the egoic sense of self, which is a mind-identified sense of self, a mental image, me, my story, my past, my future, that may be a little bit frightening. Relinquishing no thought.

Who would I be without thought? Yesterday we saw Katie ask the question, who would you be without this particular thought? It's all about relinquishing attachment to thinking, and ultimately going beyond the compulsive need to think.

And what then arises is presence, a state of clarity, simplicity, of simple beingness, a very deep allowing, allowing this moment to be as it is. That is love, that is compassion,

that is a deep care, an embracing of whatever is. In other words, embracing life, saying yes to life.

Where is life? Here, now. Life cannot exist separately from here and now.

So any denial of the now, resistance to the now, running away from the now mentally, always trying to get to the next moment because fulfillment is there somewhere, and you miss this life. And then you reach the age of 85, still looking for something, and you've missed the beloved, the divine that is here every moment. Now this moment, and there's only one moment, appears in different forms.

This moment happens to be beautiful externally, beautiful surroundings, wonderful people. So it's a little bit easier, as we sit here, to enter the state of allowing. There may be moments that appear not good on the surface, not good in little ways or big ways.

You miss a bus or a plane, something little, or something major happens, some breakdown in your life, some loss. What happens then, usually, resistance comes up, not a deep no to what is. That is the reactivity of the little me, the mind made sense of self, the story.

It gets stronger. The deeper the no is to this moment, and when a challenge comes, the no can become very intense, and that, of course, is pain, is suffering. The stronger the no, the deeper the challenge, the stronger the reactive no.

And what I call the little me, which is a mind made image of who I am, based on my past, things that happened to me. Not only that, more importantly, based on an interpretation of those things that happened to me. So the things that happened to me, together with a mental interpretation of those events and people from my past, over the years, an image forms in the head, me, I.

And there's a story, of course, that is an intrinsic part of the image of me. So everybody lives in that work of fiction created by the mind, and the me is the main protagonist in that work of fiction. It may be a big drama, it may be a tragic comedy, a mixture.

So being trapped in a sense of identity that is very small, my past, my story, which needs to be continuously revived mentally. And the little me lives in resistance to what is, because the artificial, the fictitious nature of that entity cannot be sustained except in the state of resistance to now or denial of now. Now, every life story, the little me story, is ultimately unsatisfactory.

It is not satisfying. Anybody who sits here, if you look at the story of me, it didn't quite work out the way it should have. That's not how I imagined my life to be.

It looks as if something had failed, it had gone wrong, something along the way. That shouldn't have happened like that, that wasn't meant to happen. So to discover this

element of unsatisfactoriness in the story of me, always.

However, if there is a little me sitting here, there may be one or two who are thinking at this moment, and he may be talking about everybody else, but I'm okay, because I've just found the ideal partner, I've just fallen in love, and the story has now come to a satisfying conclusion. So the little me says, okay, he's wrong about me, but he may be right about everybody else. My story is actually fine if the happy ending is there, or you just got the dream job, or you just won five million dollars in the lottery, and then the little me says, oh, this is it.

If that's the case, we'll meet again here next year. You will have returned by then from the honeymoon. The fiction that there can be a satisfying end to the story of me is upheld, of course, by the media and all those things that you watch on TV and in cinemas.

And the end of most films tells you, yes, there is such a thing as an end, a satisfying end to the little me. So the director cuts after the wedding, or just before the cut here. And now for many others it may be a revelation, the realization that, oh, do you mean to say I'm not the only one whose story is not satisfying?

I thought everybody else was fine, and just me, I wasn't doing well. So to realize my story so far hasn't been all that satisfying as a story, the little me doesn't feel complete. What's looking for something?

What's... And there's pain in the story, suffering, sorrow. But then the little me says, okay, it may not have been a satisfying story up to this point, but you've still got the future.

And the little me says, this is where the satisfying conclusion is going to happen. So this is why when you live from that mindset of the little me story, the future is such an essential, such a vital part of everybody's existence because it's there where the little me says a satisfying conclusion to my story will be reached at some point, I will get there. Whatever the satisfying conclusion of the story is, it depends on what kind of story the little me has fabricated for itself.

It may be material success, it may be finding the ideal partner, it may be reaching a state of enlightenment. One day I'll get there. So the future promises fulfillment.

That's why everybody is running towards it. If you go to a big city, I was in New York a few days ago, and everybody's almost running. Continuously.

Imagine a visitor from another planet coming and looking at that. Where are they running to? And of course, they're running to the future.

They're trying to get away from this moment, because you're hurrying, moving to the

future. Everybody is running towards the future, because this isn't good enough. I need to get there.

So it's a frantic attempt of the little me to reach the future. And if you cannot get out of the story of me, but of course here we are getting out, even just by recognizing the nature of the story, by looking at it, we are beginning to step out. Because it can only sustain itself if it remains uncontaminated.

It can only sustain itself, the fiction of the little me, can only sustain itself if it remains an unconscious movement. But when you look at it, that basically means you're now witnessing, you're watching the mind and the structure of the mind. And the recognition of that is already the beginning of the end of the unconsciousness that sustains that movement.

And it has been running like humanity for many, many thousands of years. So just here at the moment we are simply looking at the mechanical unconscious nature of the mind structures. But it's more than that.

By seeing it, the seeing is not part of it. The seeing is part of something that is arising that is not, nothing to do with the conditioned consciousness, the mind. And that's arising here.

So, if you have not stepped out of the story of me at all, the worst thing that could happen to you would be not to have any more future, because then the little me gets into a panic and says, what do I do without, the story will not reach a conclusion. If you take away future, you take away the possibility of a happy ending to my story. And it is the worst thing that could happen for me to tell you, to tell you have no more future or almost no more future.

And the strange thing is, really, this is what's happening here, in a subtle way, not, you know, not going to shock you in any way, but in a very subtle way, gradually, we are removing future. From our consciousness, so the whole, that level of consciousness, gradually, is replaced by something else. We are going into that gradually, so that the little me doesn't go into contraction, and you run out of the room.

The future seeking salvation in the future, seeking completion in the future. That's one aspect of future salvation for the little me. The other part of future is, the little me also knows that the future is very threatening.

It is drawn towards it as an answer to its story, but it knows at the same time that the future is going to kill it. Of course it will, the little me. So a dreadful dilemma arises for the little me.

It's drawn towards future as an answer, as salvation, as fulfillment, and at the same time it's continuously threatened by the future, because anything may happen, I may lose

what I already have, which may not be all that satisfying, but at least I have that, and the future may take it away from me. So the two movements that govern, whatever the fictitious entity that humans are trapped in, whatever action it undertakes is governed by two motivating factors, which are to do with future. A deep striving towards future as an answer is the movement of wanting and needing.

That's why they're all running towards it. Traditionally this has been called desire in spiritual teachings. The other movement connected with future is, my God, what's going to happen to me?

What's the future going to do to me? That's called fear. Fear arises.

So humans move between these two in a continuous conflict or dilemma. Desire, which is wanting and needing, and fear, so drawn to future and fearing it at the same time. It's easy to see why humans live in such misery.

And then the whole fiction of me cannot be sustained without being in opposition to something. The me to be sustained needs to be in conflict with something, almost continuously, because its survival depends on not me, it depends on sustaining the illusion that this is a separate entity, this is my boundary, and here are the others and the rest of the world. And that can only be sustained, the illusion of separateness, of an encapsulated sense of self, and basically because of fear that underlies the little me, it's also a state of continuous contraction, both psychological contraction and even physical contraction, the protection of the little me and its encapsulated sense of self.

It needs, so that its illusion of separateness can be sustained, it needs enemies in some form or other. Why is it, if you open a history book, why is it that 90% of human history is a history of insanity? Anybody who opens a history book says, that is mad!

So we need to get to the root of human madness, to go beyond it, not say, oh, they are mad, it's to see, I am mad. To see, I am mad, is actually a very positive thing, because where does that seeing arise? Sanity.

It's only as sanity rises you can see the madness, and we can see the collective madness of humanity as human history. It's unbelievable. Madness, killing, suffering.

So, how does that arise? It arises in each individual, embedded in the very structure of the egoic sense of self, is the need to have enemies. Enemies not necessarily in the form of people, although often that is the case too.

Enemies in the form of situations, conditions, even places. And so what's the very root of that? What is the real arch enemy of the little me?

The present moment. The thing that always is in opposition to trying to get away from our fighting, if you look to the very root of its need for enemies, is to make the present

moment into something that you need to oppose. And what is the present moment now?

Life. Because life cannot be in any other place, in any other moment, except now. So the little me lives in opposition to life.

Its enemy is life itself, which is now. If that's not mad, what is? So, it's me against the universe, the little me.

Now, without, there may be temporarily, the little me may have brief moments of relief, never for long because it cannot afford to be in a state of non-opposition to what is for long. It cannot afford to be in a state of peace for long. It cannot afford to be in a state of joy for long.

It cannot afford to be in a state of love for long, because all those things arise only when there is no opposition to what is, but a deep embracing of what is. So the little me fears that embracing of what is. Its very existence depends on not embracing what is.

To recognize that is a wonderful realization. Something within that recognition is there something in there that is nothing to do with the little me. So there are two movements, you may find it even within yourself here, something emerges that is deeper than that entity, egoic fiction, its emerging now.

And there is still the momentum behind the egoic fiction of me also maybe operating. And you can be sure that it doesn't like this. The deep need that is embedded in the very structure of the egoic mind, really a deep need for unhappiness, never made conscious because its survival, the survival of that mind structure depends on unconsciousness.

When you make it conscious, suddenly you see, wow, this is mad. My need to be unhappy, never recognized fully, always it comes in in a hidden concealed way because the reasons for my unhappiness are always out there. This is making me unhappy, that is making me unhappy, the present moment is making me unhappy, what is, is making me unhappy.

Now as long as there is unconsciousness, the causes of unhappiness are out there and there is always the interpretation, if only those things changed or I could change them, I would be okay and then you're engaged in continuing fighting with what is. I'm going to change these things out there to remove the causes of my unhappiness. If your behavior changes, if I can make you to change your behavior, then I can be happy, my unhappiness will go.

That's the illusion and many people reach the end of their incarnation trapped, the majority still, reach the end of their incarnation trapped in that illusion. Observation, if only things were different. Not seeing that unhappiness is embedded in the very structure of the mind, its need, because that is an intrinsic part of its need to fight, to sustain, its separate sense of me.

To see within oneself the need for conflict, the need for enemies and the need for unhappiness. You can see it in relationships, love, harmonious, if you meet a person, the first few days or weeks, sometimes even months, total harmony and then at first something arises that is very different, a completely different energy. The need returns for conflict.

And the longest humans are without conflict is often when they fall in love and that can last a few weeks or if you went to live on a South Pacific island, you may be free of unhappiness for a little while. But you can be sure that the unhappiness which is in here, not there, in the structure of the egoic mind will find a reason for you to be unhappy even there in paradise. There will be something that's not right.

It could be anything, mosquitoes, boredom, when there's, let's say somebody could create for you an environment that has removed all causes for unhappiness, deep unhappiness would still arise out of unbearable boredom, even to the point of suicide because you can sometimes see that with people who are born into great worlds where all their needs or desires are immediately met. And often one should say, oh, I mean they should be blissfully happy, they've got everything. And often deep misery arises, deep dissatisfaction with everything.

So you can't get away from that. But there's a deep reaction, a revulsion to what I'm saying in the little me that says well, he may be right, this may apply to other people, but really I'm unhappy because I have reason to be unhappy. The others may be in delusion, but my misery is real.

And so to see, to look through that is an amazing realization that you carry around within the structure of your mind unhappiness. I'm using that as a generic term, the Buddha used the term suffering, other traditions use the term delusion or illusion, or even sin. Christ is something not right, always sin has been misinterpreted, Jesus uses it.

Dukkha is the Buddha, unsatisfactoriness, suffering, unhappiness. In the seeing of that, it already begins to dissolve. If that level of consciousness out of which the recognition arises is sustained, the structures of human unhappiness, which are the structures of that egoic conditioned mindset, begin to dissolve.

And what then happens, it only happens if your attention moves into the now and sustains itself in the now. And so, in order for that deep conditioning to dissolve, the ego likes to make that into a problem too. It says, OK, oh my God, it must take so long to get rid of that illusion of all that unhappiness that is in my mind.

How long is it going to take to get rid of all that? If it's taken a hundred thousand years for it to arise in humans, unhappiness, suffering is not a personal problem of anybody, there's nothing personal in it, it's the human condition. If it's taken so long, will it take just as long to get out of it, another hundred thousand years?

And the ego says, yes, yes it will. Give me time. That's why there's a strong attraction to cults.

Every cult promises something. You are going to be very special, you are going to reach that, or we as a collective ego identity, that can easily happen, the little me joins with other little me's, and says, us, same illusion, slightly different form, we against the rest of the world. Some countries do that, we against the rest of the world, religions, we, us.

So sometimes the personal me becomes partly a collective me, moving out of that illusion. Now, cults give you time and promise something, and the leader usually says, if you stay with me for long enough, you can become like me, almost, not quite. So and there's an attraction because time is given, there's a spiritual longing, which is the longing to be free of all that, and the ego comes back and uses that very longing and makes more time, it needs more time.

So the illusion that a spiritual seeker can easily get trapped in, and not only in the cults, is that I need more time to become free of all that. And the amazing realization is, not only do you not need more time, time is the very illusion on which the existence of that mindset, the continuing existence and the survival of that depends. And so in a very subtle way it will always try to get in there and, please, more time.

You don't need another hundred thousand years to get out of the illusion that has taken a hundred thousand or a million years to build up. A beautiful line in the Course in Miracles says, it has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be who you are. To be who you are means who you are in your essence underneath the mind structures, the conditioned mind structures.

And the only access you have to that is through the little doorway of now. And it's only here, it's only through the power that is inherent in the present moment that all those mind structures dissolve. The power of the present moment is the power of life itself.

Your very being. And they dissolve here and now. What arises in the now is presence, allowing this moment to be.

Let's say truly that is, here we have the key. Since the survival of those mind structures depends on enemies and fighting the present moment, which is the root of its need for enemies, when you allow this moment to be, the whole illusion collapses. Now, sometimes people ask, can I make this happen?

Can I make this shift, this revolutionary, radical, this radical transformation of consciousness that you point to, that you talk about, that all the ancient teachings point to, in their essence, talk about, point to, can you make that happen? Sometimes people ask that question and say, you sound as if we could make it happen. Well, no, you can't really make it happen.

That's why I say, when you do not allow this moment to be, then you're trying to make something happen in the future. When you're allowing this moment to be, you're not trying anything. You're not trying to make anything happen.

It's the opposite of needing to make something happen. Allow, and the little knee says, this is a place of weakness, don't go there, because you will have no defenses anymore. You won't even know what's going on anymore if you don't continuously judge and label what's happening at this moment.

If you don't continuously interpret what is happening, so you know what's going on, he's like this, what does he want from me, how can I get something from him? Even looking at incredible beauty, the immediate need to say something, to relate it to something that you want, there's a flower, the need to pick it, now it's mine. To immediately, to relate to everything immediately through mental noise, instead of allowing it, because in the allowing, a stillness immediately arises, and there's no need to interpret.

Allowing implies you give up the need to interpret the world continuously through the mind. And the ego says, no, no, I will become totally ignorant at the mercy of everything and everybody. And the ego says, I will be stuck in this dreadful present moment for the rest of my life.

I will be stuck in whatever situation I'm in now, that situation that's making me so miserably unhappy, I will be stuck in it for the rest of my life if I allow it. I can't allow it. That's why I've been fighting it for 20 years, to get out of it.

Are you out of it? No, not yet, but I will. So the allowing really is something, when we talk about it, say allowing this moment to be, your ability to allow this moment to be is grace.

It arises. Not everybody in California, even California, has come here, so the message perhaps would not yet be meaningful to everybody, but to be able to sit here without running out of the room or falling asleep, which can be different defenses against the truth, or feeling what nonsense is he talking about? Or to be sitting here without that, or even if it arises, the need to run out of the room, to simply stay with it and watch that and see how it arises and how it subsides and then be back here.

That means through grace, whatever, something is already arising from within you that is not the egoic me. It's not part of the madness. It's arising.

That's why you are able to allow this moment to be. And whatever arises in the moment, yes, yes, it's good. This is relatively easy right now, although may not be easy for everybody even here, because you carry around still to some extent the burden of me.

So there's two things. There is the power of this moment here and the energy field here. Occasionally it may become obscured by a return movement of the me entity as a wave like a cloud.

Sun appears and then a big heavy cloud moves in again. And that happens when you sit here, you lose presence and begin to think about your problems. Which are never now, which exist in future, or the heaviness of past and the two together.

My problems. Let me remember what my problems are. Oh, yes, yes.

Waking up in the morning, open your eyes. For some people there can be a moment of when the noisy mind hasn't started yet. There's a simple presence.

And you look around after opening your eyes. Not everybody. Some people wake up immediately burdened by the heaviness of the little me.

Others have a moment of freedom. And then after a minute the mind starts... And you remember your problems.

Oh, this and that and that and that. Oh, my God. And immediately the heaviness descends.

The state of contraction returns. And then you turn around in bed. I can't face another day.

And that's the human condition. And we are moving beyond the human condition. No flower has ever said that, I can't face another day.

Because it also awakens when the sun rises. It has not yet removed itself out of the totality, its interconnectedness with all that is. It hasn't removed itself out of that and claimed a separate existence for itself, me.

And this flower isn't even saying, I want the sun. Why did they put me here? It's open to this and it's...

Because it's not denying what is, it's not resisting what is. It is open to something here that's even better than the sun. And it loves it.

But if it said, no, no, I want the sun, it would be closed to this. This. This moment being fully alive to the power of this moment.

And I often say to be fully alive to the power of this. Feel this moment with every cell of your body. Be here with every cell of the body.

Every cell is alive and you sense a subtle... Otherwise you're stuck in the head, trying to work out what I'm saying and there's nothing to work out. Being alive.

Feeling the very aliveness that you are. The entire energy field is present, every cell is present. You don't need to make an effort, it is present.

And you sense that you are everywhere, you are not just here, you are throughout. So

keeping, be here completely, not as a head attached to a body. Be here totally.

Otherwise you can't allow, the head is not enough to allow this moment to be. The entire being allows this moment to be. The head is not enough to be present.

Be present with the entire being. Identification. Sometimes people ask, doesn't it mean that you become identified with the body if you feel the body?

No, it's a way of going beyond identification with the physical form of the body. To feel the very essence that gives life to the physical form is not the physical form. To feel it, and then the Advaita person may say, but aren't you saying that I should identify with an object that arises in consciousness as the feeling of the body?

And isn't that, isn't the truth that knowing that I am the very awareness underlying it all. But the body is that. It's a temporary appearance of the consciousness that underlies everything.

It temporarily appears as the body. It's not the body. In a way you could say it's an illusion, the body is an illusion.

But within the illusion there is something that is not an illusion. Otherwise even an illusion needs a little bit of reality. Otherwise it wouldn't be.

So to sense the aliveness, the presence in the body, this is just a temporary way of putting it, and feel the aliveness throughout. And then suddenly there's a field of aliveness, not only within but also without, that has nothing to do anymore with your story. There's a field of aliveness within at first, but suddenly also the surrounding world has an aliveness to it.

Not that you need anything. It's beautiful, but it's all form. It's temporary.

But that presence or beingness is beyond form. So you know that which is beyond form as yourself, which is a field of still presence, intense aliveness, still presence. And forms appear in that, and that's beautiful.

The body appears, and it's fine. Thoughts appear, that's fine too, because you're no longer trapped in the thoughts. You are that which makes every thought possible.

So the key is that stillness that is so alive, that is now. So when we talk about the present moment, the now, what does that mean? The mind says it doesn't mean anything.

The mind says there's no such thing as the now. Can you show me where it is? There's only past and future, and it's something very fleeting here that really has no meaning.

That's what the mind says. But there's, when we say the now, there's a mystery in there,

and there's a key in there, what temporarily we call the now, something very strange. This moment, we're here.

Before this moment happened, as an event in time, it already had a shadowy existence in your mind as the anticipation of this moment. It was going to happen. You knew you were going to come here.

And soon it will be over, and it will recede into the past, and it will be a memory. Another present moment will be there, or the same moment filled with the appearance of some other event, phenomenal event. Your whole life, it's strange how when something is gone, it evaporates into nothingness.

Even this, there will come a time when nobody will remember this beautiful moment as an external appearance. These bodies will go, so the memories will go, and then a few photos may survive of this event, live a little bit longer, and then become yellow, and then there may even, some people may have videoed something, but that probably has a limited lifespan too. And so eventually, the external appearance of this moment will have evaporated completely, including the bodies, and yet there's something here that is beyond the external appearance of this moment.

There's something deeper. The very essence of your life, which is like a phantom, your childhood, where is it now? Events of last week, gone, dissolved.

It comes into the now, gone. What remains is the field of now, in which your whole life unfolds as form, the stillness that is underneath whatever happens. Things happen.

The stillness is there, it allows it to happen. To know yourself as that stillness is freedom. Freedom from form.

Freedom from the world. Freedom from self as the little me. And then the world is a beautiful place, it's no longer threatening, it's not threatening, and it's no longer promising.

It loses the qualities of promise, something there is going to give it to me. Nothing, you don't need, it's here now, you don't need to be given anything. Your very essence is life in its fullness now.

I don't want you to believe in that as an idea in your head. The words are only a little signpost. It's only if you are in the now, with every cell of your body, that's how it's initially, I put it, you can realize the truth of this, that life in its fullness, an expression Jesus used, he said, I want you to have the fullness of life.

Life in its fullness, beyond anything happening or not happening, nothing to do with how much time you still have as this form, nothing to do with any life situation or condition, good or bad, life in its fullness is already here, and that's, I call it sometimes, the power

of this moment, which is life. So, you don't need the world anymore then, and you don't fear the world anymore, and you don't need the future anymore, you don't fear the future anymore. It has a peripheral existence, only practical purposes, let's meet tomorrow at four o'clock, okay, that's practical, it works on that level.

Beyond that, future is no longer needed to give you a sense of its promise of some kind of deeper identity or fulfillment. It's an illusion, it never comes. How can it give you that?

There's only this. So it's going beyond your life situation and the conditions of the me, to a place of greater depth, where you need nothing, need nothing. And then, as a little gift, many things come to you on the phenomenal external level, life suddenly becomes so friendly, whereas before it was an enemy to be fighting, life suddenly becomes friendly, even the phenomenal existence has suddenly a friendly face.

Why? How can it change from being, from life being, what Churchill called, when he talked about human history, Churchill said about history is one damn thing after another. And for many people, that's how they perceive their existence, one damn thing after another.

And that doesn't happen anymore. Life is no longer perceived through, external existence is no longer perceived and created through the me, fictitious mindset of me. So, when you're not fighting life, when you're fighting life, life fights you.

It's a mirror. And when you allow and say yes, life suddenly says yes. Oh, you embrace it, that means life can flow through you freely, consciousness, life, God, just words, can move and even express itself through this form, freely.

And from being a burden on the planet, which is what humanity is right now, you become, and from being a burden to yourself, and a troublemaker to yourself and others, very little me, from being this burden, suddenly there's a blessing that walks on the planet, there's a lightness to it, no longer the heaviness of the person. And that's... Love is now present.

The person talks about love, but of course, it's all fiction. As Katie said yesterday, little personalities don't love, they want something. So the whole wanting the deep energy, the craving and wanting and needing in the future, goes.

And things you had, the little me said, I need that for my happiness. Often, they just come when you don't need them anymore. They may not, it doesn't matter.

But the strange thing is, many things simply come, icing on the cake. The cake is what matters. And you have the cake, or you are the cake.

Seek only the kingdom of heaven. Seeking is a temporary phase, you're not seeking anymore. Be who you are.

That's the kingdom of heaven which is within here, now. All the other things that you thought you needed will be added onto you. It doesn't matter anymore.

Seek. Seeking. To the end of seeking.

Seeking implies future. Seeking, even seeking to understand more. I need to understand more about spirituality.

I need to understand more about Buddhism. I need to understand more about Advaita, what are they really talking about. You don't need to understand more.

You've understood enough for you to have come here. What else is there? Then, that's the edge.

You've reached the edge of understanding mentally, working out. Any further, it's just the mind trying to get back, OK, I need some more knowledge. I can't quite work out what stillness is.

If you explain a bit more, perhaps I can get there. Is your concept of stillness the same as the Buddha's concept? You could do a PhD.

Stillness in Spirit, the Wild Religions. 400 pages. And then you become the world expert on stillness.

And perhaps, if it's all, if it's all mind, the world expert on honey who has never tasted honey. It's quite possible. You could be the world expert on honey without ever, because it's all concepts.

So, we are tasting, not just tasting, the honey. We are the honey. So, a state of consciousness arises in which thinking plays very much a secondary role.

It's becoming occasionally, this or that, your sense of who you are, of being. It's nothing to do anymore with any thought in your head about who you are. Story.

So, your history is fine. It's just things that happened to this form. You don't need to say, I'm trying to forget my history.

Burn your photo albums. No need. It's just no identification.

That's just so-and-so. My ex-husband, my ex-wife. Photo.

So, no longer seeking the self, seeking to strengthen itself through identification with your history. That was my ex, what he did to me, I'll never forget. Let me tell you about it.

That means seeking a stronger sense of self through the history. Then the history becomes the story and becomes the me. So, it's the self-seeking in your past goes.

It's just past, no problem in it whatsoever. Self-seeking in future goes. And future is only practical relevance to your life.

I'm booking a flight for next month. That's how future works, it's fine. No self-seeking in it.

I'm booking this flight which will take me to such and such a place and when I get there, there, I will find the answer, the fulfillment. So, all that self-seeking goes to strengthen the sense of self artificially. And that means just you are yourself already.

And as you always were, now. And maybe the mind goes, well, who am I then? Step beyond the edge of understanding.

Allow this moment to be. Be the stillness. You are not condemned from now on to permanent inactivity or passivity in stillness.

At first it's good as it arises. Let it arise in an environment that is conducive to stillness. Although sometimes it arises in people by itself or accidentally in an environment that looks totally non-conductive to stillness.

That's the other way, that's the way through suffering, as it happened to me. The stillness suddenly arose out of dreadful mental noise and resistance. And here, this is another way, not through suffering.

Suffering has played its part because it's taken you here and it's been good. And this is a voluntary embracing of that. Not to be pushed and kicked into the kingdom of heaven.

Life would do that to you anyway eventually, so there's no need. But it takes time. This saves time, removes time.

And as it removes time, it also removes suffering. So you can get to the end of suffering through time and further suffering until there's a self-destruction of the egoic entity when it has created so much misery for itself that it continues to exist. It cannot exist anymore and it self-destructs.

Or you've had enough suffering to come here. And the eternal message of all spiritual teachings is you don't need to suffer anymore. And the greater your suffering has been, or if you're sitting here and feel you've come here with a burden of suffering, perhaps physical, some dreadful situation, or not knowing how much more time you have as this form, not quite knowing, nobody knows.

Let's just go into it very deep. Yes. And the worse your suffering up to this point, the deeper your yes will have to be and the greater the opportunity.

It can happen that the yes uttered once can be so deep that the no never returns. One deep yes to life. The end of all no.

And that is your opportunity. You may be ready. It could be through the very fact that perhaps the form may not remain in existence for that long.

Maybe it will. There may be an element of uncertainty and that now deepens. You can go very deeply into the yes and into the now and into presence so that past and future falls away almost completely except a few practical matters.

And you walk on this straight path of now. I sometimes describe it as a tightrope of now. And that is the flowering of human consciousness.

If you walk the tightrope of now and on a tightrope, to walk a tightrope you have to be very present, totally present. Every step, there's no little me, you can't remember your problems on the tightrope, you would fall off immediately. Even fear, you can't fear the next step, you would fall off immediately.

There's only this step. And there's a total presence with every step. And this is the state that is arising and it's only in that utter and complete presence that the little me dissolves and all the problems that cling to the little me in fact make up its very existence, they cannot, they fall away, they cannot survive in intense presence.

Look at any problem in your life, no matter how serious it looks, and see if it can survive when your attention is totally here. And then you become what you have always been, which is consciousness itself, the field of still presence that underlies everything. So the person dissolves.

The heaviness is gone. That's the fulfillment of your human existence. Now, it doesn't matter how much longer this form then exists, a few weeks, 50 years, doesn't make that much difference.

Fulfillment is, this flowering is the realization of who you are. But you couldn't be able to say very much about it through the mind. If somebody asks, who are you?

There may just be a stillness. And now the strange thing is, from the point of view of the mind, it looks as if you knew less about who you are than before. And it's true.

It is a voluntary embracing of the state, and this is also key, a voluntary embracing and saying yes to the state of not knowing anything anymore. That's why it's so frightening to the little ego, an embracing of not knowing, this vast power in that not knowing. Whatever you need to know at any moment, which is always this moment, will arise out of what looks like the state of ignorance to the mind.

Whatever you need to know or anything you need to do to know at any moment, wherever, in relationships, in any situation, arises out of the state of not knowing. So to become comfortable, happy with not knowing. It's a great thing to discover if you work with people as a therapist, counselor, but of course everywhere, not to think, how can I

help this person?

People sometimes come to me, sometimes with a story, sometimes a difficult story, less so these days with stories. How could I possibly help? I could try to work out how I'm going to, I don't know.

I'm happy with not knowing. So allowing this place of not knowing. And now this applies, this consciousness, it applies to your entire existence.

It's fine not to know and then you stay with the not knowing, which is the stillness. And whatever is needed suddenly comes. It may come as words, as an action, simply an emanation of love.

It happens, it's no longer, the totality, life moves through. And then you return to the state of not knowing. It could be a simple thing like going for a walk and watching everything around you in that attentive alertness.

You're not walking there as a little me with its problems. You're walking as a field of awareness that looks at the universe, the phenomenal universe and its beauty, not needing to impose mental noise on anything, interpret, just don't need to know what this tree is called. I mean, you might know it, it's no longer important, it won't interfere with the beauty of that moment.

We're just no longer at the heaviness of a person walking through the street. A field of consciousness, of awareness. And you look at the world and you see, if you had a few thoughts in your head, you would say, this is good, every moment is good.

And God saw his, her, its creation, and I can't remember the exact words, and saw that it was good. You look, that which looks through your eyes at the world is then pure consciousness, the light that emanates from the source. The light that emanates from the one source looks through your eyes, sense perceptions, and loves its creation, because you created it.

You are consciousness, appearing as form, and it's good. So you walk as a blessing on the earth, no longer as a burden. And everything and everybody loves you for that.

Even nature, you will feel nature, trees, flowers, love your presence. It's almost as if their very being moved a little bit towards you, because within the totality where there's no separation between this and that, when you see beauty without mind, it's a self-recognition, consciousness. The flower, which is an expression of consciousness, recognizes its own beauty through you, it's not you.

So even nature finds fulfillment through that. It knows itself through you, what looks like you. And yet, all that is form, the eternal is underneath the forms.

This very moment, what are the ingredients of this moment? The voice, your perception of the voice, the totality of this space, people, flowers, lights, sense perceptions, all things. Okay, that's good.

There's also silence, that's even better. And to acknowledge the silence, listen to it, alert presence, that's the arising of stillness. Silence is helpful, ultimately you don't need it.

Stillness doesn't depend on external silence, but it's good, it's helpful to listen to silence, and it's only the stillness in you that can even be aware of silence. If your mind were very noisy, sitting here, silence would be meaningless, a concept. The moment you listen to silence, a stillness arises.

Through the stillness, you become aware of silence. So it's within and without. And then the realization, it's always within, it may not always be without, but that dimension of consciousness is always there.

And then it may arise at the most unsuspected times, you may find yourself in the middle of a noisy situation at work, little me's fighting, and suddenly silence arises and you're watching without condemnation, without interpretation. Watch. And then perhaps some words arise, you say something very different, anything that arises out of your inner stillness has a very different quality, even if it becomes words, it always has some of that stillness, the place from where it came, it still has a fragrance of that, a freshness and a newness, and perhaps you say something, and it's come out of the stillness.

A completely different dimension of consciousness is coming. Love, basically, beyond what the ego thinks love is. We've been speaking about that which cannot be spoken of for quite a long time.

Life is full of paradox. Basically, we have moved beyond time, more deeply, into the now. It looks, according to the clock, as if we've been sitting here for one and a half or one and three quarter hours, but it wasn't really like that.

One deep moment, timeless, the timeless dimension of consciousness has come in. And that looks like an event in time, but you have to accept certain paradoxes. That's how it is.

Let's acknowledge the silence, without, through the stillness, within. And now meet everything, everybody, through the stillness. Bring the stillness, be it, because you are it.

And that is the dimension of the sacred, that is arising, inseparable from the stillness. Sometimes questions are fine, but I feel at this moment there's no need for that. It would only be the mind trying to figure something out that you already know.

And I know that you already know. And your mind says, no, no, I don't know. Yes, you know.

